CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
125 LOCUST STREET
NORTHAMPTON, MA 01060

George Andrikidis, P.E.
Director of Public Works

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Northampton Has Levels of Haloacetic Acids Above Drinking Water Standards

Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Quarterly test results we received for April 2004 to June 2004, when factored into a running annual average, show that our system exceeded the standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for **haloacetic acids (five) (HAA5)**. The standard for HAA5 is 0.060 mg/L.

We sample quarterly for HAA5 at four locations throughout the city. Compliance with the standard (0.060 mg/L) is calculated by averaging the results for the present quarter with the results for the last three quarters. The running annual average of HAA5 for July 2003 to June 2004 was 0.079 mg/L, which put us over the MCL of 0.060 mg/L.

What should you do?

You do not need to use an alternative (e.g., bottled) water supply. However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor. Additional information can be found at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) web site:
http//www.epa.gov/safewater/mdbp/implement.html

What does this mean?

This is not an immediate risk. If it had been you would have been notified immediately. However, some people who drink water containing haloacetic acids in excess of the MCL **over many years** may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

Why are Haloacetic Acids found in our drinking water?

Under the provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), surface water supplies (reservoirs) used for consumption require disinfection. Chlorine has been very effective in this role by destroying problem organisms and preventing them from reaching you, the consumer. However, chlorine can react with naturally occurring organic matter (i.e. from leaves, grasses, etc.) in the water to form disinfection by-products (DBPs), such as trihalomethanes (THMs) and HAA5. Health risks associated with these compounds prompted the EPA to regulate levels of DBPs in drinking water. THMs have been monitored for more than 10 years, and Northampton has remained in compliance. The HAA5 monitoring requirements began in January of 2002 and the City's water has exceeded the required standards.

What is being done?

In December 2001, the DPW signed a Consent Order with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requiring the construction of a water filtration plant. Construction of the plant was scheduled to begin in the spring of 2003 and be completed by August 2005, but due to the denial of the special permit by the Town of Williamsburg, the construction schedule may be delayed by one to two years. However, once we begin to filter the water, most of the organic matter will be removed, the amount of chlorine needed will be decreased and the formation of disinfection by-products (HAA5) will be greatly reduced. **Until this goal is achieved, we will continue to notify customers of HAA5 levels on a quarterly basis.**

For more information contact: David Sparks, Water Superintendent, at 587-1570 x301 or 587-1097.

Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua potable. Tradúzcalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is being sent to you by: **Northampton Department of Public Works – Water Division**

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